4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

593 167 Some men when they decide to return home from work in the normal course of events do not let their relatives know that they will be arriving. There are a variety of reasons for this, one being that the mystical hazards of the journey home are increased if a man's enemies know that it is taking place. There is also sometimes the desire to check on the fidelity of a wife. A chief returning from the railway line in 1947 reached Fort Jameson and sent on ahead a man to tell the people their chief had returned. A councillor who was with him remarked 'What sort of chief is this who gives his queens time to get back to their own houses? We ought to arrive suddenly and catch them all with their lovers.'

593 167 602 The woman's kin also wish to avoid trouble in her marriage and do what they can to prevent her committing adultery if they think that her husband is still treating her well. They talk to her about her obligations to her absent husband and if they think she cannot be trusted, one of them, perhaps the woman's mother, may sleep in the hut with her to see that she does not entertain lovers there. They may warn her that if she is taken to court for adultery they will not support her.

Thus we see that there is social prescription not only of the ways in which a man and his affines should behave towards each other, but also of the ways in which his affines should behave when the man is away. Similarly a woman and her affines interact in the light of their relationship not only when her husband is present but also when he has been absent for years. As a husband can exceed his rights over his wife, so can an affine go beyond what is tolerated while trying to safeguard the interests of an absent husband. The perseverence of some brothers of absent husbands, and the limitations imposed on their actions by public opinion, are recalled by a girls' song current in 1949.

[533] I am wanting to go and sleep,
What stops me is something in the loins,
I go to the water, and the one who keeps on following comes,
He has exceeded his sibling-in-law-ship,[16]
He has dragged Eleni from the reeds.

[607] Eleni is supposed to be the wife of a labour migrant. Her husband's brother follows her to the stream, where she has gone ostensibly to draw water, as he thinks that she is really going to meet a lover. She hides in the reeds and he drags her out. Such active intervention is inappropriate and dangerous for if there is a struggle the woman is likely to claim that the man was trying to rape her. The astute brother-in-law would have waited his time until he could catch her red-handed with her lover in a village.

167 834 It is never legitimate for a woman whose husband is a labour migrant to have intercourse with another man. People regret that

193 [16] *Ulamu*, the abstract noun formed from *mulamu*, sibling-in-law.